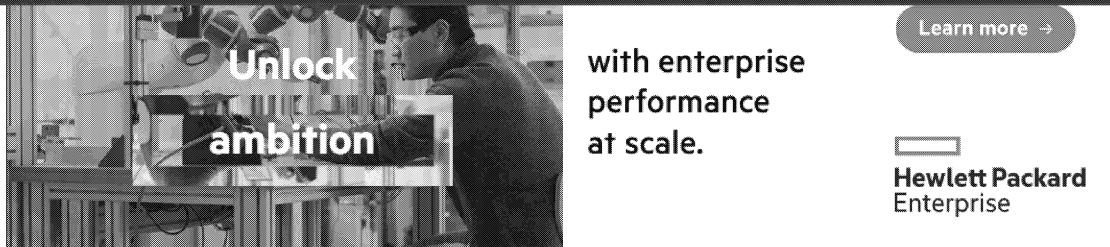



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Solaris 10 to get Zoned

Behind the Partition

 [Ashlee Vance](#)

Wed 9 Apr 2003 22:06 UTC



EXCLUSIVE It's still a ways off, but when Solaris 10 arrives, Sun Microsystems will ship the OS with a new type of partitioning technology called **Solaris Zones**.

In many ways, the **Solaris Zones** - known internally by the Kevlar code-name - will be a hardened version of the Solaris Containers currently offered to users for keeping applications isolated from each other. With the Zones, users can split up applications into numerous different compartments all running on one OS image. The amount of processor power, I/O bandwidth and memory for each Zone can be altered, and each one can also be rebooted, said John Fowler, CTO of software at Sun.

"It's a pretty simple idea," Fowler said. "You want to keep the number of OS images down to a reasonable level. With the Zones, you have a single layer of hardware and a single operating system. You have applications that think they are running on their own OS."

Sun customers currently rely on physical or hardware-based partitioning to slice up their midrange and high end servers for different operating system images. While this method of partitioning provides the most protection between OSes, it does not let users create as many divisions as the logical partitioning (LPAR) from IBM or HP.

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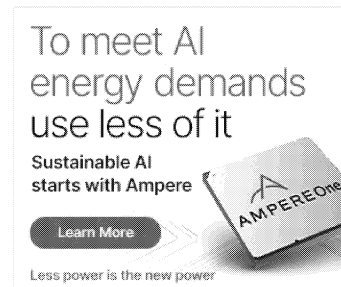
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Solaris Containers do help split up applications from each other and form something resembling a logical partition, but they have not been proven to isolate errors with the same success as a LPAR, say analysts. This could be the same potential problem faced by Zones unless Sun can show the technology works as billed.

"The big question with Kevlar is whether it will really isolate software faults to nearly the same degree as LPARs," said, Illuminata's Gordon Haff. "This is going to be a very tricky question to get better than anecdotal evidence about even after the technology is available."

Sun does get some benefit of the doubt when a new feature of Solaris is under debate because the vendor tends not to muck around with its prized code base.

IBM and HP are beating the LPAR server consolidation drum quite hard, but Sun is rejecting this path. It thinks adding more and more OS images is a waste of users' time and money.



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"I think there is a diminishing point of return if you want to run multiple OS images on a single server," Fowler said.

Sun wants to avoid the road taken by HP and IBM, which puts one copy of the OS in each LPAR. Tasks such as applying patches, software updates and adding more disk space will take less time with just one image of the OS to worry about, Fowler argued.

Sun hopes to tie the **Solaris Zones** into its over-arching N1 console that covers all types of system management and application roll outs. Fowler said plans are under way to make it possible for an administrator, for example, to create a policy that dictates whether an application can be run in a zone or not and, if so, what kind of zone.

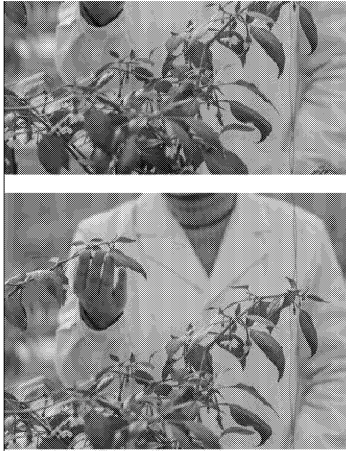
A puzzle for so long, Sun's partitioning strategy is now clear. As is the case of late, Sun continues to go in different directions than rivals, as it tries to justify a large R & D budget and a "systems company" attack.®

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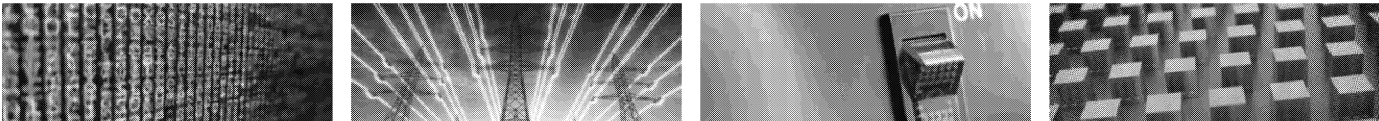




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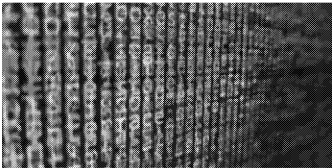


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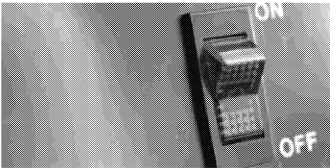


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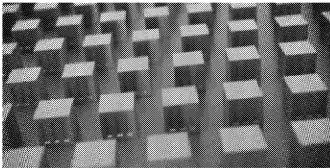


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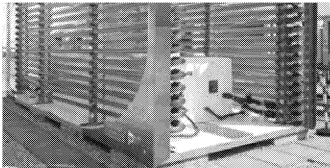


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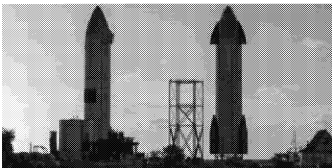


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